



Commonwealth Sheltering Program

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

2019 December

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RECORD OF CHANGES

[illegible]

Lead Agency

- Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)

Support Agencies and Organizations

- Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)
- Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
 - Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM)
 - Virginia Department of General Services (DGS)
 - Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA)
 - Virginia Public Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)
 - Virginia State Police (VSP)
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PURPOSE

This program document describes how the Commonwealth will support local, regional, and state sheltering efforts. It also defines the legal and organizational basis for the Commonwealth of Virginia to effectively respond to and recover from disasters and/or emergencies when sheltering is required.

This program document addresses state sheltering responsibilities previously addressed in Support Annex 4 Mass Care and Sheltering of the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan.

SCOPE & APPLICABILITY

This Commonwealth Sheltering Program supports all hazards and describes broad responsibilities of state government agencies and support organizations to support sheltering preparedness and operations. It addresses the state's responsibility and mechanisms to support statewide shelter operations. Supporting plans and documents provide details on authorities, procedures, response protocols, and technical guidance for shelter operations.

This program does not replace, supersede, or supplant any local plans, nor does it usurp the authority or responsibilities of local government.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- Public agencies will cooperate with this Plan pursuant to §44-146.24, Code of Virginia and Executive Order 41(2019).
- Localities will expend or allocate local resources before requesting additional assistance from the Commonwealth.

- Upon depletion of Commonwealth resources, the Commonwealth will request assistance from other states and the federal government.
- Severe weather, impassable roads, debris, or other external factors may delay delivery of supplies and arrival of staff.
- Localities have plans in place to support the basic food, water, and shelter needs of displaced individuals.
- Localities have a process for determining their shelter needs before, during, and after an event.
- Approximately 10% of the evacuated (displaced) population may require public sheltering.
- Shelter populations will decrease rapidly by approximately 95% within four days of the event.
- Shelters in non-impacted localities may need to serve individuals from impacted areas.
- Housing stock particularly accessible housing will be limited after a large-scale event. This shortage could require longer shelter operations or activation of the long-term recovery housing plan.
- Shelter operations will continue as long as there is a need for a congregate shelter.

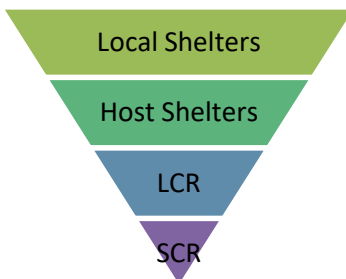
POLICIES

- Sheltering services must be equally accessible to diverse populations including individuals with disabilities, individuals who do not speak English, and diverse religions. These populations must have equal access to local and state sheltering services.
- Per Virginia Code § 2.2-3901, conduct that violates any Virginia or federal statute or regulation governing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, or disability is unlawful.
- Executive Order Number One (2018) prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, political affiliation, or against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities in Virginia state government.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

SHELTERING PROGRESSION

Sheltering in the Commonwealth begins at the local level and escalates to the state level. The Commonwealth may provide assistance upon request to support any level of progression.



LOCAL SHELTERS

All events begin locally. Local Shelters typically open first, and are operated and funded by the impacted locality or localities.

LOCAL HOST SHELTERS

A local host shelter is a local shelter opened outside of the primary impact area to support evacuees from the impact area. Localities are encouraged to enter into agreements prior to an event to establish

relationships, define roles and responsibilities, and determine policies and procedures for reimbursement and compensation. Host shelter agreements can also be set up just-in-time or through Statewide Mutual Aid (SMA). Local host shelters will open and operate, including funding and reimbursement, as defined in the host shelter agreement or SMA contract.

LOCALLY-COORDINATED REGIONAL (LCR) SHELTER

It is the locality's decision whether to open a local shelter and/or work with other localities to establish a regional shelter.

Some events may require or benefit from multiple localities within a region cooperatively sheltering rather than operating separate local shelters. This type of cooperative sheltering might occur in recovery as shelter populations are declining; in large events where the numbers of shelter residents exceed the capacity of local shelter facilities; or in events where the shelter need within each locality is so small that opening multiple local shelters is an unreasonable

option. Impacted localities can open, operate, and fund an LCR shelter with little to no assistance from the Commonwealth.

STATE-COORDINATED REGIONAL (SCR) SHELTERS

Per the process defined in the *State Coordinated Regional Shelter Plan* and in response to a need for sheltering that exceeds will likely exceed local and regional capacity, the VEST may establish a SCR shelter either by activating and opening a shelter or by assuming responsibility for the operation of a LCR shelter. The Commonwealth may decide, during recovery, to open one or more SCR shelters to enable localities to consolidate local shelters allowing local staff to support and focus on recovery efforts.

Localities retain the right to operate a local or LCR shelter regardless of whether an SCR shelter is activated.

VDSS maintains a list of pre-identified sites for use as a SCR shelter. Unless unavoidable, only these pre-identified sites will be used as SCR shelters. VDSS has existing agreements with the sites, maintains Temporary Occupancy Certificates for the buildings, and is aware of their availability according to hazard types, accessibility, required temporary modification requirements, capacity, ability to support medical and pet sheltering, and availability of backup power.

The *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan* (COVEOP) tasks VDSS as the primary agency responsible for planning for and the overall operation of the SCR shelters, including the coordination of shelter management and operational activities with all organizations assigned responsibilities in the *State Coordinated Regional Shelter Plan*. VDSS manages and operates the SCR shelters in accordance with the SCRS Plan. Staff for these shelters will primarily be composed of state employees supplemented by outside resources such as voluntary agencies, contractors, and the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

The Commonwealth funds the SCR shelter.

If the Commonwealth receives and agrees to accept a request to assume operation of a LCR shelter, it becomes a SCR shelter. The SCR shelter will continue operations in the same facility whenever possible. Transitioning from a LCR shelter to a SCR shelter will require extensive cooperation and coordination between the localities and the Commonwealth. The VEST Emergency Support Function (ESF)-6, in

collaboration with the appropriate VDEM Regional Coordination Center (RCC) Team, will lead the coordination between the Commonwealth and localities.

STATE SHELTERING SUPPORT

The Commonwealth can support sheltering at all levels of progression through the provision of supplies, commodities, and services. ESF 6 - Mass Care, Human Services, Housing Referral and Emergency Assistance is responsible for coordinating resources to meet sheltering needs of affected populations.

The VEST's support of local, local host, and LCR shelters may include equipment, supplies, personnel, teams, or services. The locality or region will follow the prescribed resource request process. Prioritization of WebEOC requests occurs according to established VEST policy and procedure. In large or catastrophic events, the VEST may preposition resources.

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Localities request assistance from the VEST using the established request management process. The VEST routinely fills requests for assistance, such as commodities or staff.

COORDINATED REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

ESF 6 will initiate and lead a Shelter Task Force (STF) when the volume or complexity of requests for sheltering assistance requires a coordinated response or the activation of State Coordinated Regional Shelters is considered.

The STF members include:

- ESF 6 –Sheltering Task Force Leader – Mass care and sheltering;
- Access and Functional Needs Officer – Policy assistance and guidance to ensure equal access to individuals with disability or access and functional needs;
- ESF 2 – Communications systems and equipment;
- ESF 7 – Logistical support, mutual aid support, and emergency procurement;
- ESF 8 – Medical, environmental health, behavioral and disaster mental health;
- ESF 11 – Pet sheltering and bulk foods;
- ESF 13 – Security and traffic management;
- ESF 17 – Voluntary agency coordination; and
- Other agencies and organizations as appropriate and/or necessary.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (VDSS)

The VDSS will:

- coordinate, develop, and maintain the SCRS Plan and the Commonwealth Sheltering Program;
- participate in Hurricane Evacuation Work Group (HEWG) and provide recommendation regarding sheltering support needed for impending or ongoing events;
- as lead for ESF 6, activate and lead the Sheltering Task Force (STF) as needed;

- fulfill ESF 6 resource requests as appropriate and able;
- monitor local shelter data; and
- activate and operate SCRS as needed and per SCRS plan.

The STF Leader will coordinate the activities required to fulfill the shelter response needs by:

- facilitating the discussion, development, and maintenance of the state-level event-specific shelter response operation;
- managing the sheltering mission(s) in WebEOC and assigning tasks to appropriate ESFs for fulfillment and tracking based on the developed response operation; and
- monitoring shelter support requests in WebEOC and reconvening the STF as necessary to reevaluate operations.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (VDEM)

The VDEM will:

- support local and regional emergency planning and preparedness;
- activate the VEST as needed;
- activate, coordinate, and facilitate the HEWG and present HEWG recommendation regarding sheltering support needed for impending or ongoing events to the Governor or designee;
- staff the Access and Functional Needs Officer (AFNO), the ESF 7 Lead, and the ESF 17 Lead within the VEST;
- maintain situational awareness and research and provide critical information to VEST agencies to assist in decision making;
- input mission assignments in WebEOC and assign to task force leaders;
- fulfill resource requests as appropriate and able;
- assist in provision of mutual aid;
- submit requests for federal support;
- coordinate efforts for sheltering operations reimbursement to localities, agencies, and partners;
- as lead for ESF 7, participate in the STF as activated; and
- support the operation of SCRS as activated and per SCRS plan.

The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Officer will:

- participate in the STF as activated;
- support the VEST on issues related to people with disabilities and AFN by advising on and assisting with physical access, effective communication access, and programmatic access in disaster response and recovery programs, operations, and services;
- coordinate with subject matter experts, Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), voluntary agencies, community groups including long-term recovery groups, FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, and Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO) and recommends equal access and reasonable modifications for response and recovery programs, operations, and services;
- assist with identification and coordination of subject matter experts through established relationships to help with resources and services, including accessible transportation resources,

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recovery assistance, search and rescue, public health, emergency messaging, emergency sheltering, feeding, and accessible evacuation operations; and

- coordinate with and supervise AFN Coordinators in the field to provide support and guidance to supporting agencies, tribes or localities in ensuring that provided services within shelters meet all accessibility requirements.

The ESF 17 leader will:

- participate in the STF as activated;
- determine specific voluntary agencies within the Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VAVOAD) that should participate in the STF and request their participation; and
- coordinate with voluntary agencies to meet the sheltering support, service and supply needs of the Commonwealth.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (VDH)

The VDH will:

- participate in HEWG and provide recommendation regarding sheltering support needed for impending or ongoing events;
- as lead for ESF 8, participate in the STF as activated;
- fulfill resource requests as appropriate and able;
- provide subject matter expertise in matters relating to the people with medical needs in shelter environments;
- monitor the emergency situation; and
- support the operation of SCRS as activated and per SCRS plan.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (DBHDS)

The DBHDS will:

- as a support agency for ESF 8, provide subject matter expertise and guidance in matters relating to the needs of citizens with mental health, behavioral health and disaster mental health needs;
- provide direction to state-managed facilities, in the event of a major disaster, to establish liaison with state and local emergency services offices and to make their facilities available for relief assistance;
- fulfill resource requests as appropriate and able;
- monitor the emergency situation; and
- support the operation of SCRS as activated and per SCRS plan.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES (VDACS)

VDACS will:

- as lead for ESF 11, participate in the STF as activated;
- provide subject matter expertise in matters relating to animals in shelter environments;
- fulfill resource requests as appropriate and able;

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- monitor the emergency situation; and
- support the operation of SCRS as activated and per SCRS plan.

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE (VSP)

VSP will:

- as lead for ESF 13, participate in the STF as activated;
- provide subject matter expertise in matters of security and traffic management;
- assist with missing persons reporting in Commonwealth shelters in accordance with standard VSP protocol;
- fulfill resource requests as appropriate and able;
- monitor the emergency situation; and
- support the operation of SCRS as activated and per SCRS plan.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (DHRM)

DHRM will:

- develop, advertise and maintain a workforce of trained state employees that can be temporarily reassigned to support the Commonwealth's emergency response and recovery activities to include shelter staff and management (Adjunct Emergency Workforce or AEW);
- provide staff to the VEST to manage the AEW in the event of activation; and
- notify the AEW of potential activation.

VIRGINIA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AGENCY (VITA)

VITA will:

- as lead for ESF 2, participate in the STF as activated;
- provide subject matter expertise in matters relating to communications services, technology and equipment;
- fulfill resource requests as appropriate and able;
- monitor the emergency situation; and
- support the operation of SCRS as activated and per SCRS plan.

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES (DGS)

DGS will:

- through the Division of Engineering and Buildings and where allowed by the *Code of Virginia*, function as the building official for all state-owned buildings or structures and for all buildings and structures built on state-owned property designated for use for sheltering ; and
- review and provide building permits, certificates of occupancy, as appropriate, for all such state-owned buildings for use as emergency shelters.

VIRGINIA PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (IHE)

IHEs will:

- assist DGS with the identification of buildings that may be used to support sheltering at individual campuses;
- ensure all facilities and sites used for state-level sheltering comply with federal accessibility laws; and
- support the operation of SCRS as activated and per SCRS plan.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Program reviews will occur biennially and revisions as appropriate. Reviews will include after action reports from relevant response operations, exercises, and drills.

AUTHORITIES & REFERENCES

AUTHORITIES

- Code of Virginia §44-146.13 to 44-146.29:2 – Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws
- Code of Virginia § 36-98.1
- Code of Virginia §44-146.18
- Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2007, Pub. L. No. 109-295, 120 Stat. 1355 (2006), Signed on October 4, 2006. Sec. 536. Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub.L. 88-352 §§ 301 & 601
- Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Public Law 101-336. 108th Congress, 2nd session (July 26, 1990).
- ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Pub.L. 110-325
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Pub.L. 93-112, § 504

REFERENCES

- *Commonwealth of Virginia State Coordinated Regional Shelter Plan, September 2019*
- *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan, September 2019*